

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**1 – 33. (Canceled)**

**34. (Previously Presented)** A method for preparing a metal or metal oxide porous material comprising rod-shaped crystals of a metal or metal oxide, which form an open framework architecture, thereby forming a sponge-like material, which comprises:

preparing an aqueous viscous solution of a water-soluble metal salt and dextran;  
allowing said aqueous viscous solution to self-solidify to form a solid; and  
baking said solid.

**35. (Previously Presented)** A method for preparing a metal or metal oxide porous material comprising rod-shaped crystals of a metal or metal oxide, which form an open framework architecture, thereby forming a sponge-like material, which comprises:

preparing an aqueous viscous solution of at least two kinds of water-soluble metal salts each having different metal elements, and dextran;  
allowing said aqueous viscous solution to self-solidify to form a solid; and  
baking said solid.

**36. (Canceled)**

**37. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 34, wherein the baking process is carried out at a temperature of not less than 500°C.

**38. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 37, wherein the baking process is carried out at a temperature in a range from not less than 500°C up to 900°C.

**39. (Canceled)**

**40. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 34, wherein dextran in the aqueous viscous solution has a concentration in the range of 10 to 80% by weight and the water-soluble metal salt has a concentration in the range of 10 to 90% by weight.

**41. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 40, wherein the water-soluble-metal salt has a concentration in the range of 15 to 60% by weight.

**42. (Currently Amended)** The method according to claim ~~36~~34, wherein dextran in the aqueous viscous solution has a molecular weight in the range of 10,000 to 500,000.

**43 - 46. (Canceled)**

**47. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 34, wherein the metal or metal oxide porous material is a soft or hard sponge-like material.

**48. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 34, wherein the cross-sectional width of the rod-shaped crystal, taken in a direction perpendicular to the length, is from 1  $\mu\text{m}$  to 50  $\mu\text{m}$ .

**49. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 34, wherein the metal element of the water-soluble metal salt is selected from the group consisting of noble metals and transition metals.

**50. (Previously Presented)** The method according to claim 49, wherein the noble metal is silver or gold.